



step into a new way!

Are stress, aching muscles, lack of energy, backache and headaches a regular part of your life? Do your relationships, and reactions to what life throws at you, cause you concern? Have you a sense that there must be a better way to manage your life? If the answer is yes, then **Tracy Gil** shows that learning the Alexander Technique may just put us back on track.

The Alexander Technique is a holistic, practical, common sense learning process that can help you to create increasingly effective ways of living. Day-to-day tasks and more specialized activities can become easier and more comfortable. Thinking can become clearer, calmer and more focused. You may even find you communicate more successfully with others and have greater control of your reactions to life's events. In a nutshell, you can use this life-long process to realize more of your remarkable potential.

The Technique has been taught for over a hundred years and was created by a man called Frederick Alexander (1869-1955). Alexander was an actor, who developed a problem with hoarseness while reciting on stage. During a long process of investigation, he made many important discoveries. He observed that he was using excessive amounts of muscular tension in many parts of his body just to accomplish the simple act of speaking. Based on this discovery, he understood that his hoarseness was caused by his own ideas and reactions.

no more tension

Over time he found a way to change these ideas, and the associated tension disappeared. He was able to make a complete recovery from the hoarseness and breathing difficulties that had troubled him for most of his life. When Alexander's friends and colleagues saw the amazing improvements he had made, they were so impressed that they asked him to share what he'd learned with them. His ideas turned out to be applicable to people in all walks of life and he went on to establish a thriving teaching and training practice. His discoveries continue to have far reaching implications, perhaps even more so today when our lives are often hectic and we can so easily forget the most vital asset we possess – ourselves.

So what does all this mean in practice? An Alexander Teacher can help you to look anew at what you are doing and how you are doing it. What if, like Alexander, your problems or limitations

are being caused by the amount of unnecessary tension you are using? If the way you are thinking about and designing life's activities is holding you back, then wouldn't it be great if you could find a new approach?

looking at ourselves

When having an Alexander lesson, you can choose to look at any activity that interests you, for example working at the computer, playing an instrument or doing an exercise. By using a combination of observation, discussion and a non-invasive use of hands, the teacher will encourage you to think about and carry out your chosen task in a different way. As you learn to apply this same process to all of your activities, living can become freer, easier and more fun.

One of the toughest jobs facing an Alexander Teacher is to explain what this experience may be like, as it is different for everybody. For this reason, many teachers will offer a free introductory session in order for you to find out more. Commonly people find the learning process relaxing, non-invasive, inspiring and fun. The greatest benefits can be gained by doing a series of lessons, either on your own or in a group class.

mind, body & soul

Recently, a student I know enthused that the Technique "helps you become who you always hoped you were." Learning how to prevent excessive tension can allow life to flow with an ease and grace, which benefits the mind, body and soul. Alexander's work is an exciting and life changing process. It encompasses the whole person in ways that can be both unexpected, and deeply rewarding.

Tracy Gil is a certified teacher of the Interactive Teaching Method for teaching the Alexander Technique and a member of the CNHC. She runs a practice in Bristol. For further information about lessons, classes and workshops go to www.alexanderbristol.co.uk

To find an Alexander teacher local to you, here are a couple of websites you can refer to:
www.alexandertechnique-itm.org and www.stat.org.uk

